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DEPARTMENT FOR AF/SPG, A/S FRAZER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/21/2012
TAGS: [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [PINS](#) [PREL](#) [SU](#)
SUBJECT: UPDATE ON DETENTION OF UMMA PARTY LEADER MUBARAK
AL-FADIL AL-MAHDI

REF: KHARTOUM 01149

Classified By: CDA ROBERTO POWERS, REASON: SECTION 1.4 (B) AND (D)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: On August 19, PolOff met with family members of detained Umma Reform and Renewal Party leader Mubarak al-Fadil al-Mahdi. According to the family, Al-Fadil remains in solitary confinement in Khartoum's Kobeir Prison. Al-Mahdi was arrested along with some 20 others on July 14 (see reftel) from his home in Khartoum, accused by the government of planning a coup and other acts of sedition. See para 5 for action request. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) Since last updating the Embassy on July 23, family members received new information and details about al-Mahdi's arrest and detention. Yousif Mubarak, al-Mahdi's son, was granted permission to visit his father on two occasions and confirmed to PolOff that he was being held at Kobeir Prison in solitary confinement. His father was also in extremely poor health, he said, but had been refused access to a doctor.

¶3. (C) According to the family (as related to PolOff and publicly announced in a press release), on July 25 National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) concluded their investigation and were going to recommend al-Mahdi's release based on lack of evidence; no steps have yet been made to implement this recommendation. On July 27, al-Mahdi's family filed a complaint and requested access to a lawyer, but to date have not received a response. The family said that some 88 lawyers have volunteered their services for the detainees.

¶4. (C) Family members also provided additional context into the events preceding al-Mahdi's arrest and detention. According to Mubarak, his father informed him that his interrogations centered on a 20-minute meeting which took place more than one year ago with Muhamad Ali Hamid, a retired army officer (who was also arrested during the July 14 sweep). During this meeting, according to Mubarak, Hamid had told his father about a plan to form a new coalition political party (to be called the "White Flag" party) which could compete in the 2009 elections, and wanted to know whether the Umma Reform and Renewal Party could help secure funding. According to Mubarak, his father said that the party didn't have finances for such an endeavor, and this was the last conversation the two ever had.

¶5. (C) Action request: Al-Mahdi's family has approached Amnesty International and the French, Dutch, UK and EU missions in Khartoum regarding the detention. The family also notes with appreciation the Embassy's statement rejecting any U.S. involvement in the alleged coup. Given the upcoming visit to Washington of State Minister Al-Samani El-Wassila, post requests that this matter be raised at the appropriate levels during the visit. Post will continue to monitor the detention of al-Mahdi and other detainees.

